

*Alaska Cabaret, Hotel,
Restaurant and Retailers Association*



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Dear Co-chairs Foster and Johnston, and the Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee:

The impacts of COVID-19 have reverberated throughout the state, with few industries being hit harder than tourism and hospitality. Alaskan businesses – particularly smaller ones – have already felt the impacts. These are the places you celebrate your birthdays, sports victories, marriages, anniversaries, and even just the places you go to get away from the stresses of life. They are the heart of every community across our great state and right now, many are struggling to survive.

This will inevitably be one the worst Alaska tourism seasons in decades, which will be detrimental to our state, as only oil brings more dollars into Alaska each year. I expect that some Alaskan businesses will not recover from this, yet we are fighting tirelessly to ensure that as many as possible will remain operating for years to come.

The House Finance Committee is the final stop for Senate Bill 52 (SB 52). SB 52 is a product of over eight years of robust and earnest stakeholder engagement, that includes substantive improvements for and has the support of all groups at the table – public health, public safety, state and municipal regulatory bodies, and all three tiers of the industry.

The boards of directors for both Alaska CHARR and the Brewers Guild of Alaska unanimously voted to approve the challenging, yet thoughtful compromise between industry tiers regarding provisions around manufacturing retail licenses. These disagreements had hindered passage of previous iterations of the Title 04 rewrite.

SB 52 is a piece of legislation that is both pro-business and pro-public health. I implore you to support the Alaska hospitality industry when it needs you the most by moving this legislation expeditiously, so we might collectively turn out attention to surviving this crisis – both in health and in business.

If I can provide any information or answer questions, please contact me. Passing SB 52 is an action the government can take in the near term to help our businesses and employees.

Thank you for your consideration and for all that you are doing in these challenging times.

Respectfully,

Sarah D. Oates
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